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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BULLETIN

VOL. III., No. 6

DECEMBER, 1905

Notes.

Mr. Okakura-Kakuzo, who left Boston for Japan in February last, returned to the city on October 25. Through the generosity of friends of the Museum, Mr. Okakura was enabled to make a number of purchases for the Chinese and Japanese collection during his trip, which extended from Nagasaki in the south through Kyoto and Nara to Sendai in the north. Mr. Okakura also brings with him a valuable collection of photographs of objects in the Imperial Museum at Tokio, which the President-General, Mr. Matano, has had the kindness to present to this Museum on behalf of the Imperial Museums of Japan. Mr. Okakura is at present engaged in the examination of a number of objects in the keeping of the Museum, which have hitherto been stored for lack of opportunity for their study.

A bit of Spanish brocade now on exhibition in the Textile Gallery (case 38, No. 5538; a gift from Dr. Denman W. Ross) has been submitted, during the past summer, to the judgment of experts at the newly opened Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. It proved identical with a fragment of material now on exhibition in that Museum, and the judges to whom it was shown during several days were unanimous in declaring it genuine. The Curator of the Museum, M. Louis Metman, who kindly interested himself in obtaining these opinions, thinks that the workmanship of the piece may be of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The design is of an earlier date, perhaps the thirteenth century. It shows a pattern of griffins and parrots among conventional vegetation, in two shades of green with silver thread.

Mr. Emil H. Richter returned early in October from a six months' absence devoted to study of the contents and administrative methods of the chief print collections in Europe. Landing in Bremen, Mr. Richter devoted a month to the Berlin Museum and nearly as long to Dresden, in the latter place studying chiefly early German masters, French engravings, and the rich collection of colored prints. A month in Vienna was devoted to the Hofbibliothek, containing remarkable collections of early Italian and German work and of manuscripts, and to the rare prints and still rarer drawings of the Albertina. In Paris Mr. Richter's time was divided between the collection of French engraving in the Print Cabinet in the Bibliothèque National and the collection of drawings at the Louvre. The remaining weeks were devoted to the print rooms of the British Museum, where a

unique exhibition of mezzotint had just been opened.

The gallery lectures under the auspices of Simmons College, which were announced in the last BULLETIN, began on Saturday morning, November 18. Three courses will be given, each consisting of ten lectures, the three courses taking place simultaneously on successive Saturday mornings at 10 o'clock. The course on Greek art by Mr. B. H. Hill of the Museum covers the history of the subject in outline. That upon the sculpture and painting of the Renaissance by Mr. William Rankin of Wellesley College is devoted principally to Italian art, closing with three lectures upon Flemish and German art and upon engravings. The course of Miss Keyes treats of Dutch and Flemish painting, the first nine lectures reviewing the art of the seventeenth century, and the tenth studying its relation to that of to-day. The fee for each course is five dollars, payable in advance. The number of tickets issued for each is limited to twenty. Application for admission to any of the courses or for information regarding them should be made by mail or in person to the Secretary of Simmons College.

Character Portraits of Japanese Actors.

In cases E-H at the western end of the Japanese Corridor there has lately been installed a series of thirty-two colored prints representing actors, the work of Katsukawa Shunsho (d. 1792), an artist of the Ukiyoye School.

The prints made by artists of the Ukiyoye (worldly) school, who were given this name on account of their familiar treatment of passing life, began to be produced early in the seventeenth century, in response to a popular demand for illustrations at small cost, and, although rude at first, attained, a century later, high artistic quality. The Ukiyoye artists were the first to seek subjects in the popular theatre, which, in contradistinction to the No, or classical drama, was socially depreciated in Japan as in contemporary Europe. The portraits of actors executed by Katsukawa Shunsho were the masterpieces of the artist, who is also remembered with honor as the teacher of the famous Hokusai. They have been assigned a high rank among the colored prints of Japan, and therefore of the world, on account particularly of their mellow harmony of color and sentiment of life and passion.